1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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/Jamshedpur/

Introduction

Most Santal are still agriculturists, but some have turned to
464 less time-honored work. The chief industry in which these
[184] others are employed is as characteristically modern as the San-
[241] tal themselves are not. It is the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO), the largest and oldest modern iron and steel company in India. Since Santal have been employed by TISCO from its founding over fifty years ago, enough time has elapsed for change to become manifest and for the directions of change to become evident.

Jamshedpur, the industrial town which was created to house TISCO, was carved out of the jungle of Singhbhum district, Bihar, in 1908; it owes its location to the rich natural resources of the surrounding area, in which the Santal and other closely related tribes form a substantial part of the population. The
[161] population of the city has been drawn from every section of India as well as a number of foreign countries and has grown to more than 218,000. Jamshedpur is extremely atypical compared to other Indian cities—the fact that it is a company town of unprecedented size accounts in large measure for its atypicality. TISCO has from the beginning completely controlled the government of the town, provided housing for most of its workers, operated a school system, and furnished other services. It is a city as much dominated by modern industry as a medieval city was by its cathedral. Traditional institutions, such as temples and socio-political organizations, exist but are weakly developed; the Tata Company, the Tata Workers Union, and the town's competing regional and national po-
[564] litical parties are the dominant corporate groups. Caste persists as an institution for regulating marriage, for assigning employment in certain traditionally degrading occupations, and to a
[178] certain extent in structuring social interaction. But class in the traditional Western sense is increasingly displacing caste as the

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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• 464 organizing principle of membership in social groups and in [178] social interaction.

It is chiefly the southern Santal from the territories adjacent to Jamshedpur who have contributed to its working force, and these are the Santal with whom I have done field work. They [167] come largely from the Dhalbhum subdivision of the Singhbhum district in Bihar, the Mayurbhanj district of Orissa, and from the former princely states of Seraikela and Kharswan, now also in Singhbhum; a few have come from the Manbhum district of Bihar, north of Jamshedpur, and from the Midnapur district of Bengal on the east.

Since Santal industrial workers live both outside and within Jamshedpur, exceptional opportunities were available to com- [121] pare separately the effects of industrial employment and living in an urban environment. Most of the Santal workers live outside the city of Jamshedpur in village-like settlements (*bustees*) of their own construction. Some of these *bustees* were formerly traditional agricultural villages, while others have grown up only since the development of Jamshedpur and the influx of industrial workers. These settlements from which the workers commute daily to Jamshedpur lie from three to ten miles from the city. The smaller number of Santal workers who live within Jamshedpur either occupy Company houses scattered throughout the town or live in one of the *bustees* within the town. [114] Though I spent considerable time with the city Santal occupying Company houses, I unfortunately did not have the time to make more than casual observations of the city *bustee* dwellers. [167] Almost all Santal industrial workers, whether living in Jamshedpur or in a *bustee*, come from native villages within a fifty-mile radius of Jamshedpur.

114 The *bustee* in which I did intensive field work, and which I
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1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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Chapter 3 The Rise of Education

177 The advent of the market and the failure of the Santal rebel-
178 lions to achieve significant political power led to a decrease in
• 464 Santal solidarity and thereby contributed to an increase in acculturation and assimilation. This effect, however, was limited so long as there was no major industrial development. But with the rise of Jamshedpur and its associated industry and educational establishments, Santal solidarity seriously declined. A critical factor in this process has been the severance of the Santal from the web of traditional social relationships resulting from migration to industrial employment.

177 In 1900 almost no southern Santal were literate and perhaps
327 none had received any formal education. By 1957 the situation
871 was markedly changed, and the Tata Iron and Steel Company (TISCO) at Jamshedpur has been the primary source of that change. TISCO has built the schools and motivated the Santal to attend them.

Two of the three colleges within the area occupied by the southern Santal were established by TISCO, one in Jamshedpur and one in Chaibasa, a town in Singhbhum. While the number

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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of schools of all levels has increased throughout this area, Jamshedpur has probably as many high schools as all of Mayurbhanj District. TISCO has also provided a trade apprentice school, and enough elementary schools so that I heard of no instance in which a child missed schooling because of lack of facilities.

The effect on motivation is perhaps even more significant since the Santal throughout the area are affected by it, whatever educational opportunities prevail. Until the mid-1940's, when certain new political positions became available, the industrial town of Jamshedpur was virtually the only place at which an educated Santal might gain some return proportional to his educational investment. The entire structure of positions and salaries in Jamshedpur's industries, particularly in the relatively highly rationalized TISCO, makes it clear, even to the most unsophisticated, that it is educational attainment which is rewarded. Though the Santal chiefly occupy the lower echelons of factory employment, the literacy figures that I obtained comparing villagers, *bustee* dwellers, and city Santal support the conclusion that Jamshedpur is both motivation and lure for the educated Santal.

LITERACY RATE AMONG ADULT MALES

Village	20%
Bustee	42%
City	88%

Because of the limitations of the sampling method used (see pp. 64–65), these figures are probably not perfectly representative except for the city Santal, who were completely surveyed; but the order of difference is significant. Most of this literacy

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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212 was obtained before coming to Jamshedpur, so that it is not primarily the result of the education facilities actually created by Jamshedpur.

871 • 464 Many Santal children and young men are being sent by their families to live with kinsmen in the *bustees* or city because of their superior educational institutions. Furthermore, almost all children of Santal workers, even females, get some schooling.

[857] A key factor, apart from greater recognition of the economic value of education, is that there are few opportunities for these children to contribute to the family income from employment in the vicinity of Jamshedpur; children of villagers, however, began doing various farming chores even before they reach school age. Santal children in particular are very much aware of this difference. Since the number of Santal employed in Jamshedpur has grown rather steadily, so has the number of children of such workers who receive education.

871 Unfortunately, there are virtually no public figures showing the extent of the growth of literacy and education among the Santal. The following figures for the years 1924 to 1939, provided by the Education Department of the State of Mayurbhanj, give some idea of the steady growth of school enrollment among tribals during this period; no doubt this was accelerated during the boom war years.

My field inquiries indicate that there were no high school graduates thirty years ago and certainly no college graduates. Today there are few villages without at least one student attending high school, and I have met at least seven high school and three college graduates as well as two "B.A. failed," a special Indian designation which indicates a level of attainment as well as failure.

Education not only importantly determines "life chances" but

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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184 priest's brothers remarked that "the working people come
796 only when it is time to eat." The priest also complained of this, as he had done at several other ceremonies. However,
[123] there were many more present than is usual, for my camera and the prospect of having a photograph taken which might later be obtained from me was a potent lure to these people. My assistant reported almost no workers present at these same rites after I had left India. The remainder of the ceremonies are performed as in the village, except that there is no procession of dancing men and women to lead the priest back into the village.

184 The attenuation of the ceremony and the relative non-par-
771 ticipation of migrant industrial workers is not significantly the
776 result of secularization. In spite of many interviews and casual discussions about the supernatural I found little evidence of decreased belief in the deities or the efficacy of rites. Also, many of these men occasionally returned to their villages for various festivals, and when I saw such men in their native villages I found their participation as ardent and regular as that of any villager.

177 In my view the most important cause of this attenuation of,
178 and non-participation in, ceremonies is limited identification
184 with the *bustee*, and there is evidence that this is the result of
796 migration to industrial employment. The second most important cause of attenuation and non-participation is the time demands of industrial employment.

[621] Those who participate most regularly and fully have strong
[464] grounds for identifying with the *bustee*. Almost all are natives of Daredih. The two other regular and full participants include the only immigrant worker who has bought land in Daredih and a very early immigrant who has become assistant headman.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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177 number of immigrant workers present when it comes time to
178 eat the offerings that have been made, drink the rice beer which
184 has been offered, and join in secular dancing for pleasure is
796 invariably greater than those present during the performance
621 of village ceremonials.

It is not that the immigrant workers regard it as wrong to worship the deities of the *bustee*'s Sacred Grove or to offer respect to its priest and founder; on occasion and in varying degrees they will do both. Except for "Old Man Headman" and the boundary deities, the same beings are celebrated in their native villages. It is rather a question of having less attachment than of opposition. As these workers say when asked about non-participation, "It is all right because all is being done properly in my native village."

182 Typically, migration to industrial employment does not re-
423 sult in acquisition of agricultural land at the new place of
• 464 residence; both limited availability of land in such areas as
621 well as alternative employment make this difficult. Lack of agricultural land belonging to the *bustee* limits identification. Ownership of such land has the opposite effect; as the regular attendance at Daredih's communal ceremonies by immigrant workers who had purchased land there tends to show. Similarly, the Santal have a long history of migration, and Santal who move to a new village where they acquire land show none of the signs of lack of identification characteristic of immigrant workers in Daredih. Thus it is not simply migration which is responsible for diminished solidarity, but migration to industrial employment.

177 The *Baha* festival was, of course, not the only ceremonial
178 casualty of migration to industrial employment of which I saw
184 evidence at Daredih. At the great *Sohrae* festival, held in Oc-
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1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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the local lineage, but it is filled with the pollution of some unknown *Diku* caste.

Another obstacle to worship that the city Santal encounter is that it is illegal to brew rice beer in the city. This restriction is also cited by the city Santal as a reason why they do not practice ancestor worship. On several occasions the police have interfered with its manufacture in town *bustees*.

Were the city Santal able to live side by side in a single section of the city and to build their own houses, they might at least attain the solidarity of the *bustee* communities. But the policy of alloting houses follows the universalistic principles which TISCO has deliberately fostered. Houses are assigned according to rank in the factory hierarchy and seniority, with personal preference a minor consideration. Thus, the Santal and other ethnic groups are generally dispersed. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that most of those Santal who have chosen to live in Company houses are relatively well educated and highly acculturated; nor is it surprising that the lack of a Santal community in the city is contributing markedly to the Hinduization of the Santal children living there.

Migration to industrial employment has acted as a sociocultural solvent significantly affecting marriage and ceremonial patterns. Weber's notion of its importance is borne out, but in the cases examined it does not appear to be "the mere fact of living in quite different surroundings" which accounts for its significance. Here its effect seems largely due to its tendency to disrupt traditional social bonds. In the absence of such disruption, as in the case of the natives of Daredih, it seems that traditional practices evolved in a context far removed from urban-industrial conditions are surprisingly viable. These findings support Nash's contentions about the importance of mi-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

121 gration in producing change and, conversely, provide additional
182 evidence of how little change may accompany industrial em-
464 ployment in the absence of migration. Since rural migration produces none of the effects of migration to industrial employment and since industrial employment per se does not produce the changes described either, the combination must be studied in its own right.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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Chapter 5 The Extent of Hindu Absorption

182 The effects of migration to industrial employment thus far
• 464 analyzed have been to accelerate the decline of Santal solidarity among the Santal generally and especially among Santal industrial workers. It has thus furthered the same tendency which the closure of the political rank path and the spread of the
177 market and of increased wealth differences accelerated. Before
771 moving on, it is useful to consider how much Hindu social
127 absorption has accompanied this decline in solidarity.

Indian census material on religious identification is often cited as evidence of Hindu social absorption. Converting such figures on the southern Santal to percentages, the following table can be constructed. Conclusions from these figures, which indicate very little in the way of a trend, must be drawn with extreme caution.

127 My own field observations suggest that these figures do not
177 reflect major changes in religious belief and practice. There
178 are virtually no villages where half or even one-tenth of the Santal practice Hindu rituals distinct from the ritual practices
771 of the other Santal residents, nor is there some sizable propor-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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668 467 is the extreme importance of political power in determining the outcome of labor disputes. The Santal and other tribals were strong supporters of the Tata Workers Union as long as it remained politically unaffiliated. After independence it became a Congress union, and since Congress is the major opponent of the Jharkhand party, a threat to the Jharkhand movement. At the time of my field work the Jharkhand party began the formation of a "workers association" to counter this threat. There is considerable latent support for this development because most tribals are opposed to the present leadership of the Tata Workers Union, which they regard as inattentive to their needs and biased against them. They accuse various leaders of the union of giving special preference to members of their own caste or people from their own province. Whether due to Jharkhand efforts or not, a number of special considerations for "aboriginals" have improved the economic prospects for tribals in Jamshedpur. The state government has exerted [464] pressure on TISCO and other firms to hire "aboriginals" and to provide evidence that they are being trained for and given jobs of high pay and status. To this end TISCO is made to furnish periodic reports indicating the number of "aboriginals" employed and their positions in the company hierarchy. With [452] TISCO's help, local tribal leaders have established an "*Ādibāsī*" Cooperative Society, a savings and loan association to which many tribals have entrusted their savings. Thus, with the help of political organization, the special status of "aboriginals" has been made to confer special benefits—some of which might possibly have been forthcoming anyway, since the welfare state ideology is dominant in India, and is backed by official tradition of special benefits to "scheduled" tribes and castes. In any case, the general context within which the Jharkhand worked

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
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121 schools, one may anticipate the borrowing of basic orientations or configurations as well as specific traits. The RCS then, suggests one way in which cultures may change without remaining really the same; the anticipation of the possibility of such radical change in societies which have conceded rank is of obvious importance in understanding adaptability to economic development.

In the absence of an open political rank path, industrial employment has been shown to diminish solidarity. This decline is chiefly due to the following conditions: (1) increased education which furthers the emulation gap; (2) separate income plus migration, a combination which severs traditional ties; (3) the time demands of industrial employment; (4) dispersal of the community and inappropriate facilities in the urban environment.

In the presence of an open political rank path, industrial employment may contribute substantially to a new solidarity. This effect is chiefly the result of increased education, which makes members of the industrial community the most appropriate representatives of their community and hence those who have the most direct interest in political victory and solidarity. Since they are also likely to be among the most acculturated, it is in the industrial centers where the emulation-solidarity conflict is most intense and therefore where the center of cultural development is likely to be.

The RCS provides a tool for analyzing the prospect of re-
121 cruitment and commitment of an industrial labor force from
• 464 an encysted society which has conceded rank. As I have indicated elsewhere,[12] the Santal have readily made themselves available for employment at Jamshedpur since the founding

[12] Orans 1959.

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

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• 464 of the city. Furthermore, there being no economic advantage in their making seasonal shifts from farm to industrial labor, they have been reasonably steady workers. Yet everywhere in the literature on tribals and peasants in industry there is discussion of heavy turnover and absenteeism. One of the chief causes of this unsteadiness is said to be the preference for leisure rather than increased income resulting in the traditional backward-bending supply curve for labor. Traditional Santal culture has been shown to have an unusually heavy commitment to "pleasure"; why then do the Santal not fit the stereotype of the tribal industrial worker?

To be sure, a large number of Santal must work steadily at Jamshedpur or be discharged and starve. However, figures cited here and elsewhere show that many might have remained in their native villages without unusual hardship. Perhaps it may be concluded that a sufficient condition for developing an adequate and steady labor force from tribal peoples is that it be drawn from societies which have conceded rank, assuming, of course, that pay and working conditions are adequate. Such societies will have developed strong emulative tendencies, and the consequent gap between the available economic means and the exogenous goals to be emulated (which are much more likely to require purchase, and thereby involvement in the money economy, than endogenous ones) may be wide enough to ensure considerable industrial commitment.

The switch from an exclusively economic rank path to a combined economic and political one may well result in a social and cultural movement as described. Such movements, which will be led by the elite, are likely to produce a rapid diffusion within the encysted society of emulated traits. The cultural resurgence which ensues may well result in such "revitaliza-

1: Orans E-5 (1957-1958) 1965
AW42 Santal AW42

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464 tion" as to have a positive effect on labor morale; this was certainly evident among the Santal. In general, any increase in the probability of mobility will serve to curtail pleasure and encourage rank pursuit; no doubt the reverse is also true.

The RCS in Newly Emergent Nations

121 The RCS has special relevance to the conditions generally prevailing in newly emergent nations. By virtue of being new, if nothing else, these nations are particularly hard-pressed to establish national solidarity. At the same time these nations typically begin their independence containing a number of encysted societies, each having in various degrees maintained a separate identity. Under such tension culture is especially likely to become a tool of opposing societal interests. If there is substantial political democracy it may be anticipated that encysted societies will show strong signs of preserving their identities and maintaining and accentuating distinctive traits. If rank concession exists, such "nativism" on the part of encysted societies ought to show signs of the naturalization processes characteristic of the emulation-solidarity conflict. The dominant national society may also be expected to "use" culture, fostering and even developing, if necessary, customs to symbolize and bind together the new national solidarity. In the absence of political democracy it would seem that opportunities of economic advance in the context of a market society would favor assimilation and national solidarity; this observation, however, is by no means meant as a recommendation.

2: Skrefsrud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

i. Male and female servants.

People who are short of help in their family take in servants. They ask somebody to find some for them (saying): Find a servant or the like for us somewhere. When they have found some they tell them, saying: At such and such a place I have found that there is one. Then the man who wants a servant, and the one who went to find one, go and bring the young man or the girl, and his or her parents. They give them food and beer; thereupon they talk about the wages, in case of perquisites then of these, in case of money then about this. Male servants get two rupees yearly as wages, and as regards perquisites they will keep for themselves daily one handful of all kinds of agricultural crops, as they are harvested. Servant girls get only one rupee in yearly wages, but as regards harvest perquisites they get the same as male servants. The male servants get a change of clothes for the rainy season, viz., a piece of cloth five cubits long and a loin-strip. When they have worked the full year, they get a loin-cloth, five cubits long and a cotton-shawl of five cubits. At the Sohrae on the day of bathing they get twenty breads; at this time they talk about continuing or leaving. Servant girls get, as a change of clothes for the rainy season, a loin-cloth of three cubits and to carry over the breast and shoulder a piece of cloth, four cubits long. And when they have worked the full year, they get a woman's cloth, ten cubits long, to dress in. 357

The male servant helps the master, and the servant girl helps the master's wife. If there are no servant girls, the male servant will at cock-crow help the master's wife to pound. A male servant, with whose work and doings the master's wife is pleased, lives in great comfort. But if the master's wife is displeased, then however good the master may be, the male servant will have trouble. His food she will give him stingingly, and she will also worry her husband to make him scold the servant. If the master's wife is pleased with the servant, she will not let him be scolded by her husband. If the master's wife has a grown-up daughter, they may sometimes keep a servant also as a house-son-in-law; but only when the master's wife is pleased; it does not happen because the master says so. If the master's wife is always good, servant girls have great comfort, otherwise they get no end of trouble.

If they take some boy in, only to tend the cattle, they give such a one one rupee the year, and as clothes a loin-cloth, five cubits long, and a cotton shawl, five cubits long, besides food.

When they engage hired workers during the time of agricultural work, whether they are men or women, they give them breakfast, the noon-meal, for the children one portion rice left-over from last evening, and two seers paddy or Indian corn, as wages. 464 465

2: Skreferud M-5 (1870-1871) 1942 AW42 Santal AW42

464 One kind of poor people do not become absolute paupers, because when they have no necessary work of their own, they work for wages with wealthy people; thereby they get their subsistence, and people also feel compassion with them. They put their children to work as cattle-herds, or they make them fetch water and leaves, and people give them more than what they have a right to get, and when their children go to glean at harvest time, they leave much for them. People who have no bodily strength they also help in the same way, if they have no relatives who are able to help them. And when orphans 736 have no natural helpers, the village headman and his deputy will take such friendless ones to themselves, and they live in great ease, because no one will be able to scold them calling them orphans. Afterwards when they have grown up, they marry them off. Formerly there were no begging people, and also nowadays only a very few have learnt to beg from the Dekos and walk round in the villages and beg; this they do not call good, and there is no need; because if they have a wish to work, they may easily support themselves in the villages. Halt and lame, blind and not fully developed persons might get gruel, by only watching the houses and doors of people.

556 Some good people could easily become wealthy; they have plough-cattle, they also have working people; but from fear of people they do not become very wealthy. They earn only just so much as to get food. Some women, it is said, are very envious of wealthy people; they say: These have very fine things to eat and drink; we have nothing. Then they cast an evil spell on them; then these wealthy people become ill, they become utter paupers, and they die. And such women also bury bongas in the house of wealthy people, so that these die thereby.

g. Mutual help in the village.

476 Formerly people who were not poor also helped each other very much, when there was any need; and nowadays also good people help each other. They ask each other for fire, [178] they give each other lime and tobacco to chew; kodalis and forks, axes and adzes, chisels [426] and mallets, ploughs and clod-crushers, pestles and wooden mortars, winnowing-fans and baskets, and so on, they lend to each other. And if a man has no cart, or he has too few, the village people will without taking any pay let him have cart and bullocks for one day. But if any of the bullock-owner's people go along to drive the cart, the man who has asked for the loan will have to give rice and curry. And also when building a house, when ploughing, planting, making ricefield ridges, and harvesting they help each other, and those who ask for help have only to give rice and curry, and occasionally they also give them beer to make them glad. And in fever and illness they visit each other, they help each other to pass the night, and when there is any necessity, they also help each other fetching water and leaves, plastering the court-yard with cow-dung and pounding, and men who know to give medicine do this without any charge. They get food, and when

Sri Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

The Hindu "Kamar" does work for them, the "Kumhars" make their pots and plates, the "Tantis" weave their clothes and some other depressed class Hindus mostly live within their localities. The influence of the Hindus living nearby saturates the thoughts and ideas of the Santals, and when we remember that ethnologically many of these Hindus were aboriginals in origin, we can find out the reasons why many Santals are really anxious to describe themselves as Hindus like their neighbours. In their rural settlements, one can find the Santals joining the worship of the Hindu gods and goddesses like Durga, Kali and Mahadev. Like the rest of the Hindus, they salute these deities and the entire tribe dance and amuse themselves during these ceremonies.

Population

A recent worker on the Tribal Demography in India[1] regrets that the data on the tribals are the most inaccurate of all gathered together in Census reports. The net effect, he says, is to understate the number of tribals and correspondingly to overstate the number of other groups.

I. Singh, in his *Development and Adibasis*, in Asian Labour, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan. 1950) says, "Adibasis...number not less than 30 millions accord-

1 *Tribal Demography in India* by C. B. Mamoria, p. 24.

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
AW42 Santal AW42

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Jòmak' ńunyak' bòeha bànuk' taleya,
Mènt' ñèpèl bòeha ahajibà.
Akal kèdae gateñ sāwanek'edae
Ità rànu gateñ, bale ñawana,
Sanam hòpòniñko ḍiṅgàṛ cabayen.

(Translation)

Welcome, welcome! O friends dear!
(We have) neither food nor drink to offer.
But we offer you our greetings,
(It matters little whether) the harvest
failed or it was in plenty;
For want of seeds (and consequent want
of food)
All my sons have nothing of their own.

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Out to trace variations in Mayurbhanj from the Santals in the Santal Parganas, we were somewhat pleased to see that their houses were better built and more commodious, but the inner economic structure told the self-same tale as in the folk-song.

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We selected some villages at random and questioned the Santals (without claiming for ourselves the functions of the economic surveyor) on the point. But they replied, "We are very poor. Our average

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agricultural income is from Rs. 5 to 6 per month. Those more industrious supplement it by working as day labourers which may bring them Rs. 3 more. But about half of the population are indebted to

3t Mukherjea O. Y-4,5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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mahajans and many of us run to the tea-gardens to earn a living.'"[1]

Statistics sheds further light on the condition of the cattle, the mainstay of an agricultural population. "A large section of the aborigines consisting of the Santals, and the Bhumijs, and forming about 50 per cent of the population, do not care for milk as an item of nutrition. This perhaps contributes to a certain extent to their indifference to the improvement of cattle. Even as beasts of burden or as instruments of husbandry, the cattle in the state are very poor in quality.'"[2] So depending on such ricketty props, they can only turn out paddy and thereafter "biri" (*mug* pulse), in pathetic ignorance of supplementary means of livelihood like cottage-industries.

Little wonder that with such limited means of livelihood and scanty fare as we have already noticed they offer little resistance to intoxication. Their wants and worries weigh upon them so much that they take to drunken forgetfulness to drown their

1 Ref. *Census Report of Mayurbhanj*, 1931, p. 10, which reads "During the last decade 1,497 coolies belonging to this State were recruited for work in the tea-gardens by the garden-sirdars."

2 There are in all 600,000 heads of cattle in the State (Total population 8089,603) page 71 *Census Report* of Mayurbhanj, 1931.

Jt Mukherjea O. Y-4, 5 (ca. 1933-1939) 1962
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562 not get drunk." Only if we had not seen women
293 babbling in drunken brawl with the introduction of the outstill system in the Santal Parganas, and had not educated Santals at Baripada told us an opposite tale, . . we could thoroughly agree with her sex-patriotism, if such a phrase is permissible.

562 In house-construction, however, the division of
342 labour has a nicety of its own, for, we learn, the
784 women cannot sit upon a thatch except on pain of
[783] social excommunication. Such a pollution can only
[462] be expatiated by *Pujas* to the god "Dhòrom." So by its very necessity, house-building is man's
562 preserve. A quite similar taboo attaches to them
784 during funerals when according to custom, women
764 cannot accompany the procession beyond the limits of the village where the death occurred.

464 Santal men engaged in the police service were
625 highly spoken of by the Superintendent of Police,
159 Mayurbhanj, as efficient, obedient and hard-working. Asked if their drink-habit was not a hindrance to them, he was emphatic that it did not matter at all. Mr. Mahanty, a Deputy Magistrate, spoke in a similar strain about his Santal employees.

562 And we have seen women at work, at work
461 during the heat-wave of the Santal Parganas when all nature flies indoors, women singing at their work, punctual to a fault and hard-working to a painful extent. But, if her hour of work is seven a.m.

4: Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
AW42 Santal AW42
SANTAL PARGANAS

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[634] The Governor understanding the mistake of his predecessors tried to appease the Santal by removing the genuine grievances. He made the Santal territory a separate district called Daminikoh, with four sub-districts, Dumka, Godda, Pakur and Rajmahal. The charge of these sub-districts were given to a Deputy Commissioner and four assistant Commissioners. The [625] regular police was abolished and the duty of keeping [622] peace and order and of arresting of criminals was vested in the hands of the parganait and the village headman.

In the social sphere also steps were taken to ameliorate the condition of the oppressed Santals. The [426] money lenders were not permitted to extort their debts [804] over and over again by recourse to trickery or otherwise. False weights and measures were corrected and cheating in this department was punished and the Santals could now sell their produce in the market witout fear of being swindled. The abolition of serf- [566] dom and the new relationship between capital and [466] labour were far reaching reforms, and the Santal could earn his living as a free worker on the Railway instead of being a slave of a powerful protector. Again, the [464] beginning of tea plantations about this time gave a fresh impetus to profitable work and a higher economic level was achieved by the Santal, who further decided to migrate to the tea area, and on the expiry of the contract to return with a tidy some of money. Such a diverting of labour caused an easing in the struggle for existence among those who stayed at home and enabled the migrant to earn enough to establish himself securely for life.

Thus out of the rebellion came some lasting good and the Santals in the end benefited from it.

4; Biswas D, E-3, 4 (1931-1945) 1956
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and it is conducted according to the provision of the Indian Christian Marriage Act.

Material Culture. Material culture of the Santals of the Santal parganas has not much changed. They now wear cotton dhuties, shirts and gangees and the women have accepted cotton saris which are used by the Hindus. The well-to-do Christian Santals wear European dress, *i.e.* coats, pants, shirts, socks and shoes. The christian women wear Saris, blouses and petti coat according to the Hindu style.

Some of the younger men and women of the Christian community go out for employment in the towns and cities and when they come back they display their superior material culture, such as fountain pen, wristwatches and other luxury goods.

Rice beer is their important drink but the Christian missionaries make propaganda in favour of total abstinence, and the Christian Santals are gradually giving up this habit and tea is being substituted for it. Machine made cigarettes are slowly coming into use.

In the preparation of rice it seems they have copied something from the Bengali Hindus. The Santals like the Bengalis use boiled rice for their food and unboiled rice for offering to their tribal deities.

The indigenous husking machine of the Santals is mortar and pestle, but they also use husking lever (dhenki) in husking rice which they have copied from their Hindu neighbours.

The Santals, when they speak among themselves, use their own language. But with the 'Dikhus' in the Santal Parganas they speak in broken Hindi and

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the tables may be turned on those who lord it over them. In Bodding's collection of the Folk-Tales[1] there are two stories which turn on the fact that the bodies of high-caste strangers house the souls of animals, while the bodies of men of low caste house human and beautiful souls. (The means by which the real person can be discerned is to look at him through the wing feather of a vulture.) In common with other tribes of their group and many primitive peoples in other parts of the world, the Santals refer to themselves as "men" (*hor*). A Santal once said in reply to a direct question as to whether any other race was superior to his: "No, there are no others who are greater than us. You can see that from the fact that even today our womenfolk will not eat rice that has been cooked by Brahmins. Formerly, when our menfolk ate Hindu rice they were made to sleep outside for one night; they could not sleep with their wives. When they brought rice from outside to the house they were made to eat it in the courtyard and clean up the place where they had eaten, and then wash their own eating utensils." Many Santals work as day labourers in the fields of well-to-do caste Hindus and receive payment in grain or sometimes in cooked food. The cooks in the homes of their employers are Brahmins, and so by refusing to acknowledge the supremacy of the Brahmin they hold themselves aloof from the Hindu social structure. Nevertheless, the complete aloofness of former days has been modified and is maintained only by the women. As one might expect, Santals share with others abhorrence of social customs which do not agree with their own standards of morality, and they exaggerate the iniquities practised by other peoples. The same person said: "When the *Deko* put out their lamps at night they have no sense of what is right and wrong. They respect no one, whether their younger brother's wife, elder brother's wife, their own sister or anyone else. Moreover, they do not respect any of their relations by marriage."

Many of the *Deko* make a living out of the Santal, as the cat finds its sustenance in his home. The analogy is by no means perfect, and its chief value for the Santal is that it ministers to his self-respect. In the Bankura district many of the landlords of the Santals are Sundis, who are themselves classified as an Exterior or Scheduled caste. Their hereditary occupation is the distilling and selling of spirits, and they are usually the lessees of the government liquor and drug shops. They owe their present

[1] P. O. Bodding, *Folk-Tales*, Vol. III, Nos. 74 and 77.

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his courtyard after the midday meal used to make sure of rising at the right time by telling his children to waken him when the shadows had reached a certain spot.

During the night the time is indicated not only by the position of the moon but also by the stars, and particularly by reference to the constellation Pleiades. There are at least two myths relating to the sun and the moon. In the one the sun is male and the moon female, while the stars are their children. The absence of the stars from the sky in daytime is explained by a story that they made a pact to eat their children. The sun carried out the bargain and so there are no stars visible by daylight, but the moon evaded her promise and so some of the children survived. The other version says that both the sun and the moon are male; they became related to each other by marrying each other's sisters. Only a few of the stars and constellations are named. The Pleiades have the same name as one of the clans; the Milky Way is known as the "cow track", and the Great Bear is the "old woman's bed".

Between the harvest and the Spring festival, a period which corresponds with the cold weather, the villages present a deserted appearance, due to the annual migration to the east for work in the harvest fields of the Ganges delta. This seasonal migration, dictated by economic necessity, plays an important part in the life of the area. Farther to the north many Santals work in the coal-mines round Asansol, while to the south labour is drawn to the great steel town of Tatanagar. In this area migration to industrial centres is rare; the Santals regard the conditions in industrial towns as highly dangerous to health, and they affirm that nothing will induce them to go there. The same reason, however, does not prevent them from leaving their own villages in a non-malarious tract of country for the malarious rice-growing areas farther east, in consequence of which the money earned is often more than spent in the expenses of protracted illness and long periods of idleness. Each village organizes its own party of migrants, who go to work for the same masters year after year. The wages they receive are more than double what is paid in their own locality, and so they earn the money required to pay rent, to meet social expenditure for marriages, and to pay off old debts. The homes are left in charge of the aged, and some of the children are left behind. The villages are denuded of able-bodied men and women, apart from a few who do not need to go. Family parties travel together, babies and very young children being carried

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by their parents. It is no uncommon sight to see a man striding along the road with a carrying pole across his shoulders; in the basket slung from one end he carries some of the family cooking utensils, while the youngest member of the family sits confidently in a basket at the other end. The immediate economic advantage of this annual migration, without which they might be forced to leave their present homes with dire consequences for their tribal stability, is secured at a heavy price. In addition to the toll on their health, tribal sanctions are loosened away from the village. Offenders against the tribal law, runaway brides, women accused of witchcraft, and many others who do not wish to submit to discipline can find a refuge away from their homes, and each year the number of those who elect to stay "east" is growing.

The older generation regard the yearly exodus as the prime cause of moral laxity because it flouts an old taboo. Formerly no Santal was supposed to cross the Damodar river, which forms the northern and eastern boundary of the Bankura district. When at first men were drawn away to work over the river the women were not allowed to accompany them. The reason given for this prohibition was that by crossing the river they would bring misfortune on themselves and their villages. The underlying causes may be connected in part with the fact that the tribal gods are forest gods and could not protect them on the other side of the river, where there are no forests; and partly linked with the fact that the Damodar has an important place in their customs for disposing of the dead.[1] Whatever they be, the old taboo is now ignored.

During the last few days of *Pus* (mid-January) and at each month's end till the Spring festival, parties of men, women and children can be seen returning along the roads in single file, the women always in front. They are bent on reaching their own villages before the festivities which mark the turn of the month. The old people watch for their return and the relieving of their responsibilities. They enjoy greater leisure and may be seen more often squatting on the narrow ledges that surround the houses, sunning themselves. As men and women return from the east they find employment chiefly in felling trees and in carting both wood and leaves to the railway. For many years the traditional attitude of the Santal to the forest has been to make clearings and begin cultivation. The forests of the area are privately owned by the landlords, and they are exploited for their timber.

[1] See Chapter 11, p. 153.

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for their timber. The *sarjom*, which predominates, is a valuable tree, but locally it has not been permitted to grow to any height. The trees are cut once in seven years and the timber is exported chiefly to supply firewood in the towns, while the leaf is used for the leaf plates required in city homes and food shops. This activity provides the main subsidiary occupation and is in full swing whenever work in the fields slackens, though it is not sufficient to keep the Santals at home throughout the year. Women share in the occupation; they help the men by stacking the timber as it is cut into lengths, and they collect the leaves which older women sew together while sitting at home. Other women, in the time they can spare from duties at home, collect the twigs and dry branches which they need for domestic fuel. Boys from about the age of seven are engaged in their occupation of tending the village herd of goats and cattle, for which they receive wages from the owners of one anna per month for each goat and two annas per month for each head of cattle in their charge. They are sometimes joined by the younger girls, but after the girls are nine or ten they stay with their mothers, look after the house or help to nurse the younger children.

Women play little or no part in the organization of social or religious life, but they are supreme in household affairs. Although men lay claim to superior intelligence and women openly disclaim any knowledge or interest in affairs outside the home circle, the attitude of the two groups towards each other is one of good-natured tolerance. In Barikul, at the close of a festival when there had been much drinking, the men were feeling unwell. Babulal reports: "Some of the men are saying: 'Yesterday I had nothing to eat, so give me something today.' To which the women reply: 'We have eaten all the food; you men are drunk!' And so they drank more beer and spirits, and became even more drunken than they had been the day before." In his diary entry for the next day he records: "Today all the drunks have begun to beg for some stale rice gruel. The women scolded them: 'You have earned a lot of food, haven't you? Why should you not go out to beg?' " After this chaffing the women relented and gave the men some food before they set out once more to their work. The Santal wife attends fairs and markets; she buys her own clothes and attends to the household shopping. The contrast between them and their non-Santal neighbours is heightened by the fact that they do not cover their heads. One end of the *sari* is thrown loosely across the breasts and over the left shoulder.

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their tribal dances, the activity takes on a self-conscious quality which is quite unable to stand up to the general assumption of the Bengali community that these dances are fit only for the uneducated and "simple" villager. The education of girls follows a somewhat different pattern. For many years the Christians were slow in taking advantage of facilities for girls' education and the numbers in the girls' school were comparatively small. To a former generation girls were destined to the life of village housewives, and the education provided was not only irrelevant but it positively endangered the success of their daughters in marriage. Many of the older generation and some of the younger express a preference for illiterate wives who need less clothes and become proficient in house and field work by living at home. In school the girls live a sheltered life. Although agricultural training is given both to boys and girls in school through the care of gardens and through work on the rice fields belonging to the mission, such activity is regarded as an extra and some parents have voiced the view that it is a form of exploitation! In recent years, however, a change has come over the general attitude towards girls' education owing to the growth of a small number of economically independent unmarried women whose earnings are valuable to their families and also to the rise of a demand for educated wives by a section of the men. The changing attitude was illustrated by the fact that when in 1937, as a result of a change in policy, the girls were housed in cottages constructed as nearly as possible on the lines of a Santal village, there was considerable opposition from the parents. They objected that the girls would have too much housework in addition to their studies.

A new class of Santal Christians has been created which sets the tone for changes in the community. The more intellectual members are lost to village life; they pass to High School or to other training and many of them retain only slender links with their village homes. They follow a wide range of occupations unknown to Santals of the older generation, in government service, as paid mission agents, and in recent years they have begun to enter the ranks of industrial workers in the city. Girls have become nurses and teachers. The local leaders of the Church are largely salaried members of the mission staff who are "compound" centred rather than village minded. Their small but regular wages have made them better off than the great majority of the peasants among whom they work; and one result is that the latter do not invariably follow the lead they are given.